



SPACE FLORIDA



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2023 ANNUAL REPORT





ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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# MESSAGE FROM SPACE FLORIDA CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear Stakeholder:

I am honored to serve as the Chair of the Space Florida Board of Directors and share the remarkable progress we've made in the past year to bolster Florida's aerospace economy. Florida continues to be at the forefront of innovation, attracting leading aerospace companies, and fostering an environment where public and private sectors collaborate seamlessly. With a focus on infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and unique financial tools, we are solidifying Florida as the future for all things space.

Space Florida's contributions have expanded and deepened the aerospace industry, creating a robust ecosystem in the Sunshine State. From manufacturing to knowledge-based services, construction, and beyond, our impact extends across key sectors, enriching the economic landscape of our state. In fact, Space Florida has had a \$5.9 billion economic impact on the state since 2007, and we're just getting started. Over the next five years, we project to contribute over \$5.3 billion to the economy, proving Space Florida to an invaluable force for the industry.

The dynamic landscape of Florida's aerospace sector continues to evolve and mature, attracting new companies, nurturing the expansion of established ones, and fostering innovation across all related domains. Alongside Governor Ron DeSantis, Space Florida, and our invaluable stakeholders, I am honored to help ensure that aerospace companies see the transformation of their visionary ideas turn into soaring realities.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Space Florida Board of Directors for their steadfast leadership in making Florida's space industry the epitome of excellence. My appreciation also goes to our former President and CEO Frank DiBello and the entire Space Florida team for their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts.

Florida's enthusiasm for the future of aerospace is second to none, and I eagerly anticipate the opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we will continue to propel Florida to new heights.

Sincerely,

Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez  
Chair, Space Florida Board of Directors



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Over the last year, Florida's aerospace industry has grown at a record pace, continuing the transition from solely a government-led sector to a dynamic commercial market. This transformation underscores our commitment to positioning Florida as an unparalleled hub for all things aerospace, a commitment that is steadfastly driving industry growth across the state.

In FY2023, the Florida Spaceport System showcased its unparalleled capabilities by supporting an impressive 62 U.S. launches, a nearly 40% increase from the previous fiscal year. This monumental achievement propels us toward our vision of Florida becoming the premier global and interplanetary capital for aerospace commerce.

Cape Canaveral saw heightened launch activity by our esteemed public and private sector partners, not only for exploration and research, but also for emerging business lines such as satellite-based broadband connectivity. We were thrilled to welcome Amazon's Project Kuiper to our Launch and Landing Facility this year, the first land lease and development project following the completion of our infrastructure improvements to the area. Of course, our story extends beyond the Cape as well, as we continue to work with groups such as BAE Systems, SIMCOM Aviation Training, CAE USA and more to expand the aerospace footprint across the state. This is just the beginning of many more partnerships that we expect to develop in the coming years.

Looking ahead, our ambitious goals for the next decade center on maintaining Florida's leadership in developing the most diverse and capable space ecosystem globally. Undoubtedly, Florida stands at the forefront of space exploration, research and development. Our unbeatable location, unparalleled experience, and unmatched financial tools create an environment where new business ideas soar to new heights.

Collaboratively, Space Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis, and our Board Chair Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez, have diligently worked and will continue to invest in Florida's space future. Through these efforts, we are dedicated to providing the marketplace with the best infrastructure, workforce, and business operating climate, ensuring sustained growth for our industry at large.

In this new era of aerospace commerce, Florida is ready to lead, and this journey promises to benefit our entire state and beyond. As I head into retirement and pass the torch to new leadership, I extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and the entire Space Florida team for their unwavering commitment to our shared vision during my tenure as president and CEO.

Frank DiBello

President & CEO  
Space Florida



# FUELING AND FINANCING AEROSPACE ECONOMY

Over the course of the past fiscal year, Space Florida has achieved remarkable milestones in the aerospace industry, actively contributing to the growth of our state's economy.

We have successfully recruited, retained, and expanded a total of 15 aerospace-related companies, leading to the creation and preservation of nearly 5,000 high-quality jobs. Space Florida has demonstrated a proactive commitment to advancing Florida's aerospace industry by implementing a robust set of 15 strategies outlined in the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development.

Our unrivaled experience, unmatched financial tools, and unbeatable location, positions Florida as the global hub for the aerospace industry and solidify Florida as a beacon for high-tech companies, attracting their interest and encouraging expansion.

As of June 30, 2023, Space Florida's dynamic business development project pipeline boasted a total of 146 projects at various stages of development. These initiatives collectively represent an estimated capital investment of \$3.9 billion, solidifying Space Florida's pivotal role in facilitating substantial economic growth and technological advancement within the industry.

In line with our mission to propel forward innovation and research in the aerospace sector, Space Florida has provided \$15.9 million in funding to support 30 research projects, partnerships, and grants. These investments not only underscore our dedication to fostering cutting-edge advancements, but also serve as a testament to our unwavering commitment to the industry's continuous growth.

Space Florida is where leading aerospace companies get everything they need to see their new ideas take off. In a world where it takes a lot more than just a tax break, some real estate, and a pat on the back to ensure new initiatives gets off the ground, Space Florida brings the necessary resources and expertise together to drive the industry forward.

**146**  
**PROJECTS**  
**IN PIPELINE**

**15**  
**AEROSPACE-RELATED**  
**COMPANIES RECRUITED,**  
**RETAINED AND**  
**EXPANDED**



**\$3.9 BILLION**  
**CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN PROJECTS**

**15.9 MILLION**  
**IN FUNDING TO SUPPORT 30 RESEARCH PROJECTS,**  
**PARTNERSHIPS, AND GRANTS**

**15 STATE STRATEGIES**  
**IMPLEMENTED**

**NEARLY**  
**5,000**  
**HIGH-QUALITY**  
**JOBS RECRUITED**  
**& RETAINED\***



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

Space Florida commissioned an independent economic impact study of the organization's activities.

Since 2007, Space Florida's total economic impact on the state was \$5.9 billion. Over the next 5 years, the state's aerospace finance and development authority's total economic impact is expected to be more than \$5.3 billion—that's an average annual impact of \$1.1 billion.

Space Florida is transforming the state into the global and interplanetary hub for aerospace commerce. Space Florida's capital projects coupled with the work to foster innovation, research and development, and support a talented workforce have diversified and deepened the industry, creating a robust and competitive aerospace ecosystem in Florida. Space Florida is where aerospace companies get everything they need to see their new ideas take off. No other state, no other organization—does it like Space Florida.

## TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT AND IMPACT ON KEY SECTORS SINCE 2007

Space Florida's average annual impacts have been steadily increasing. Since 2007, part of that \$5.9 billion impact includes:

\$2.8 billion in GDP throughout Florida

\$1.7 billion in household income

\$548 million in federal, state, and local fiscal revenues

Space Florida has been responsible for a steady increase in annual impact since its inception. Annually, the state's aerospace economic impact averaged \$172 million from 2007 to 2011, \$487 million from 2012 to 2016, and \$520 million from 2017 to 2022.

While Space Florida's total economic impact is distributed throughout a variety of the state's top industries that support aerospace, the largest impacted sector was within knowledge-based services (more than \$2.5 billion), followed by manufacturing (nearly \$1.3 billion), construction (almost \$1.2 billion), and wholesale trade and transportation (more than \$412 million).

It's projected that over the next five years, manufacturing will surpass knowledge-based services as the sector most benefiting from Space Florida.

# ECONOMIC IMPACT WORKFORCE

Space Florida's impact extends to the entire aerospace workforce, with Space Florida projects supporting nearly 20% of Florida's estimated aerospace workforce. Of these jobs supported, 45% are in the knowledge-based services industry sector, 25% are in construction, and 11% in manufacturing. The remaining is spread throughout various industry sectors.

As the state continues to play a leading role in space exploration, its impact on the economy is felt throughout Florida, with many businesses benefiting from the industry's presence. Space Florida has positioned the state to be the dominant launch site in America and the partnerships the organization has forged have paid huge dividends.



**Space Florida has fundamentally changed the image and brand of Florida as an aerospace state. In Florida, we have an environment where commercial aerospace can thrive, where national defense is a priority, where top-tier educational institutions educate our aerospace workforce, and where we keep on making history. Space Florida has opened the door for the aerospace industry to extend its reach to nearly every sector in Florida, making it an essential part of our state's economy.**

**– Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, Chair, Space Florida Board of Directors**





# STATEWIDE REACH

Space Florida's Corporate Development and Capital Programs pipeline, encompassing a wide array of projects across the state beyond the scope of the Spaceport Business Unit, boasted an impressive number of projects. As of June 30, 2023, there were 106 projects in the Corporate Development and Capital Programs pipeline valued at approximately \$3 billion across 29 counties, 7 of which are designated as rural areas of opportunities. More impressive is that 18 projects have not selected a specific region, but the companies are confident about being in Florida. That means, Space Florida is an early strategic partner for some of the most innovative aerospace companies in the world.

This geographic diversity underscored Space Florida's commitment to ensuring that aerospace development is not confined to urban centers but reaches into the heart of rural communities, spurring economic growth across the state.

All projects have undergone Due Diligence and eligibility verification prior to utilization of the Space Florida toolkit. Notably, Space Florida took an inclusive approach by actively seeking out regions within the state that may not have previously been in the spotlight for high-profile aerospace projects. These regions were home to companies integrated into supply chain industries, either as manufacturers of critical parts and components or as service providers.



Space Florida's commitment to extending its reach and engagement across the state was demonstrated through active participation in various programs, conferences, and events. Collaborations were fostered with organizations with statewide reach such as the Florida Economic Development Council, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, FloridaMakes, CareerSource Florida, the Florida Venture Forum, 35 Mules, ITEN Wired, and North Florida Rural Economic Partnership. These strategic engagements serve as a conduit for Space Florida to gain insights into opportunities for aerospace growth in new regions while informing partners about the opportunities to leverage the Space Florida toolkit.

Space Florida's proactive engagement with a multitude of stakeholders, including state, regional, and local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, airport and port authorities, and various industry-oriented bodies, have been instrumental in broadening the statewide project pipeline. This early and sustained engagement was not only a strategic imperative but a vital factor to ensure the optimal realization of benefits for the companies involved and the timely achievement of their project milestones. Through these collaborative efforts, Space Florida continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the aerospace industry's footprint and prosperity in the Sunshine State.

# BAE SYSTEMS - NORTHEAST

- \$201 million Jacksonville Ship Repair Expansion
- Conduit Senior Debt Issuance

Space Florida's efforts to expand its footprint and diversify locations of projects within its pipeline have shown incredible success. It exemplifies our commitment to fostering cutting-edge advancements and robust economic growth, in the aerospace sector and related industries. The BAE Systems Jacksonville Ship Repair expansion project is an example of how strategic investments and collaborative efforts between industry leaders can propel Florida to new heights in aerospace and maritime excellence. The Space Florida partnership with BAE Systems reinforces our statutory mandate to work with companies across the diverse aerospace landscape, which includes "the application of aerospace and aviation technologies in air-based, land-based, space-based, and sea-based platforms for commercial, civil, and defense purposes."

The start of construction on the modern \$201 million Pearlson Shiplift and land-level repair complex by BAE Systems at its Jacksonville, Florida shipyard marks a momentous milestone for both the company and Space Florida's vision of statewide expansion.

The new complex, anticipated to be completed in 2025, will not only revolutionize BAE Systems' shipyard capabilities but also significantly expand its docking capacity by approximately 300 percent. Beyond the immediate impact on job creation, with an estimated 1,000 new positions expected to be generated, the project carries the promise of sustained economic growth in the region.

The state-of-the-art shiplift system, engineered by Pearlson Shiplift Corporation, is designed to effortlessly accommodate a Flight III U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer or a commercial vessel displacing approximately 25,000 tons. Beyond servicing the Navy's surface fleet at Naval Station Mayport, BAE Systems has its sights set on expanding its offerings within the commercial ship repair market.



NOTABLE  
PROJECTS:  
FROM  
INITIATION TO  
IMPLEMENTATION

# CAE USA - TAMPA

- \$70 million Headquarters Facility
- Bank Loan

In Fiscal Year 22/23, Space Florida continued its partnership with CAE USA, Inc., a partnership started in 2017 when the company broke ground on their cutting-edge headquarters at Tampa International Airport. The project is currently in the implementation phase. Space Florida played a pivotal role, collaborating with the company to secure essential financing for their strategic campus development within the airport's premises. CAE USA, Inc., a distinguished provider of training and simulation services for the U.S. Department of Defense and allied defense forces, introduced a state-of-the-art campus concept that comprised a remarkable 102,000 square-foot training facility alongside a substantial 133,000 square-foot home office. Modeling and simulation capabilities are the lifeblood of the aerospace industry. These capabilities not only streamline the design and development of aircraft and spacecraft, but also enable rigorous testing, training, and scenario analysis, ultimately reducing risk and ensuring safety and reliability. From national security needs to space launches, modeling and simulation capabilities are paramount to the aerospace industry and will continue to see the growth and expansion of companies that are leading the charge. Space Florida is already working with two of the top companies, CAE USA Inc., and SIMCOM Aviation Training, with more to come.

This partnership underscores the profound importance of working closely with aerospace companies like CAE USA, Inc., not only to bolster our portfolio but to enhance our statewide presence. CAE's continuous expansion signals their enduring commitment to Florida's aerospace landscape. Space Florida's role in identifying additional equipment needs to support their growth exemplifies the agility and responsiveness in meeting the evolving requirements of industry partners. By working with partners time and time again, Space Florida continues to diversify its portfolio, solidifying its position as a driving force in advancing Florida's aerospace ecosystem and ensuring the state remains at the forefront of the aerospace and defense industries.



NOTABLE  
PROJECTS:  
FROM  
INITIATION TO  
IMPLEMENTATION

# SIMCOM AVIATION TRAINING - ORLANDO

- \$75 Million to \$110 Million SIMCOM Expansion
- Lease Financing of Equipment

In July 2022, SIMCOM Aviation Training re-engaged with Space Florida to expand our partnership and finance additional simulators, increasing their investment from \$75 million to \$110 million. In 2020, SIMCOM Aviation Training announced it was investing in a new worldwide headquarters in Orlando. The new location will house a state-of-the-art training center including the addition of seven CAE full-flight simulators.

SIMCOM Aviation Training serves customers from over 80 countries worldwide, providing pilot and maintenance training across a variety of general aviation, business and commercial aircraft types. The company has long-standing relationships with many of the world's aircraft manufacturers, owners, commercial airlines, and business aircraft operators.









# FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY UPDATE

In Florida, space is designated as an official mode of transportation. As such, Space Florida works with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to strategically deploy dollars from the Spaceport Improvement Program (SIP) within Florida's Spaceport System Territory, which currently includes these strategic locations in Florida statute:

- Cape Canaveral Spaceport
- Cecil Spaceport
- Eglin Air Force Base
- Cape San Blas
- Space Coast Regional Airport and Spaceport
- Patrick Space Force Base

The FDOT designation gives Florida an advantage over other states because Florida looks at the entire ecosystem that supports aerospace. Florida has recognized that space is not a program; it is a collection of high-value destinations for cargo and people - destinations that require safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation operating on market-driven schedules.

As of June 30, 2023, Space Florida's Spaceport Business Unit had an impressive 40 projects valued at \$890 million in its project pipeline. The majority of these projects are on the Space Coast.

The Spaceport Business Unit harnesses the partnership with FDOT to strategically attract new infrastructure investment in Florida. Ultimately, this isn't about one company, road, or bridge. A modern, safe, and efficient infrastructure ecosystem ensures greater accessibility, streamlining the movement of assets and talent and to ensure faster, cost-effective logistics. When infrastructure is improved, Florida becomes a stronger magnet for aerospace companies and private investment who want to be where the top aerospace companies already are, and where the infrastructure and climate works for them. This further solidifies Florida's standing as the premier global and interplanetary capital for aerospace commerce.

# FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY UPDATE



## AMAZON'S PROJECT KUIPER – SPACE FLORIDA'S LAUNCH AND LANDING FACILITY

### \$120 MILLION SATELLITE PROCESSING FACILITY

Amazon's Project Kuiper expanded to Florida, investing \$120 million into the construction of a satellite processing facility at Space Florida's Launch and Landing Facility (LLF) located at Kennedy Space Center.

Project Kuiper is Amazon's low Earth orbit satellite network, which aims to provide fast and affordable broadband to unserved and underserved communities around the world. This new facility in Florida will enable the company to conduct final preparations ahead of satellite deployment through heavy-lift launch vehicles from Blue Origin and United Launch Alliance (ULA).

Adding Amazon's satellite processing facility to the growing industrial capability in commercial space is a testament to the power of building a statewide ecosystem that supports companies across the entire aerospace supply chain. This facility locating to Florida underscores the importance of Space Florida and the entire state's commitment to infrastructure improvements and capital investments, which have transformed the state into a global center for the aerospace economy. As the first land lease and development project, following the installation of the utility corridor at Space Florida's LLF, Space Florida is proud to work with Amazon in their mission for global connectivity. With Amazon's Project Kuiper constructing and operating the facility in the state, Space Florida continues to reach broad manufacturing, assembly, and processing capabilities, and connects those capabilities with the state's highly accessible research, development, workforce, and training capabilities.

The new facility will play an integral role in Amazon's plans to begin full-scale production launches and early enterprise customer pilots in 2024. Project Kuiper will eventually serve tens of millions of customers, including residential, enterprise and government customers operating in communities without reliable broadband.

#### KEY AMAZON FLORIDA SATELLITE PROCESSING FACILITY FACTS:

- Amazon to invest approximately \$120 million in new construction and high-value equipment
- 100,000+ square foot in payload processing and support facilities
- Amazon's Project Kuiper utilized Space Florida's lease structure agreement, which is part of the state's financial toolkit
- Expected to be operational in early 2025
- Bring up to 50 new jobs (with an average annual wage of \$80,000) and an additional 300 during the construction phase





We are proud to partner with Space Florida to bolster the growing space industry in Florida and elsewhere across the United States, and we look forward to adding more talent to our skilled operations and manufacturing team. These employees will play an important part in our mission to connect tens of millions of customers worldwide."

-STEVE METAYER, VICE PRESIDENT OF KUIPER PRODUCTION OPERATIONS



This partnership not only fuels Florida's reputation as the gateway to space, but also accelerates Space Florida's mission to transform the Launch and Landing Facility into the premier location for aerospace innovation. Together, we are solidifying our position as a global leader in the space economy. We look forward to the remarkable achievements and endless possibilities to come."

-LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JEANETTE NUÑEZ, CHAIR, SPACE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



We are proud to continue our investment in Florida and to join the historic Space Coast community as we invest in people and facilities to support Project Kuiper, Amazon's satellite broadband network. We are grateful to Governor DeSantis and his administration, as well as our regional partners, for investing in infrastructure, training a highly skilled workforce, and maintaining an economic climate that allows Project Kuiper to advance our mission of providing internet access to unserved and underserved communities around the world."

-BRIAN HUSEMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AMAZON



# FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY UPDATE



## AIRBUS U.S. SPACE AND DEFENSE – EXPLORATION PARK \$75 MILLION EXPANSION

In 2023, Space Florida worked with Airbus U.S. Space & Defense to leverage an initial investment into an expansion opportunity which would allow Airbus to produce satellites for additional customers including the U.S. government. In 2016, Space Florida announced work with Airbus OneWeb Satellites to establish the world's first and most advanced high volume satellite manufacturing facility in Florida to produce satellites for OneWeb's mission to bring affordable internet access to the entire globe. This expansion of the existing state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Exploration Park was made possible by Space Florida's work with Airbus to upgrade its manufacturing capabilities within its existing leased facilities through improvements, retooling, and additional high-value equipment necessary to increase production capacity.



# SPACEPORT BUSINESS UNIT & FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY



## LOWCARBON HYDROGEN MOU

In April 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LowCarbon Hydrogen Corporation and Ocean Green Hydrogen to create a research hub for clean hydrogen technology in Florida. The company has been in collaboration with Space Florida to support the development and deployment of clean hydrogen and related technologies for aerospace and space industry launch applications.

The partnership between the organizations is a significant step towards promoting Florida as not only the launch capital of the world, but also the place for companies to grow across the aerospace supply chain.



Our state is taking a bold step towards promoting long-term development in the aerospace and space industry across the entire supply chain. From manufacturing and launching to fuel production, Florida is the global leader in the new space economy."

-GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS



As launch cadence continues to increase from Florida, we need to think strategically about our fueling capabilities. This partnership with LowCarbon Corporation and Ocean Green Hydrogen adds to an ecosystem which allows business to build, launch, recover, refurbish, and relaunch, all within the Sunshine State."

-LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JEANETTE NUÑEZ, CHAIR, SPACE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY UPDATE



## NASA CAUSEWAY BRIDGE

In June 2023, Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), NASA, and Space Florida celebrated the momentous completion of the improvement project on the NASA Causeway Bridge with leaders and legislators cutting the ribbon more than 100 days ahead of schedule to open the new eastbound bridge. The \$126 million project used a combination of state and federal funding.

The opening of the newly built bridge is the first step in the project. A second bridge, for westbound traffic, will be built with an expected opening date of early 2026.

To harness the full potential of the space industry, it is critical that we invest in robust infrastructure that supports the demands of modern space activities. The new NASA Causeway Bridge serves as a powerful enabler, facilitating the flow of resources, talent, and ideas between the mainland and the spaceport complex.

The completion of the NASA Causeway Bridge highlights the importance of infrastructure upgrades in this dynamic sector. Space as an official mode of transportation is integral to the state's identity, as no other state can boast a quintimodal system. In this context, robust infrastructure becomes the foundation of aerospace industry growth. Modernizing transportation infrastructure, such as the NASA Causeway Bridge, ensures that Florida remains at the forefront of the aerospace industry. From streamlining the movement of critical resources, talent, and innovations to solidifying Florida's position as a global leader in space commerce.

This partnership project reflects Space Florida's commitment to fostering an environment where innovation and industry can thrive, fueling economic growth, and propelling Florida's aerospace ecosystem into new frontiers.



“ The new NASA Causeway Bridge is evidence of our Administration’s focus on improving Florida’s infrastructure. This year, the Space Coast is projected to host close to 100 launches, further cementing Florida’s position as the launch capital of the world. With surging demand across the commercial aerospace industry, we are committed to improving infrastructure to accommodate space payloads making their trek to launch pads. This NASA Causeway Bridge will meet the demands that ensure Florida remains the global hub for all aerospace activity.”

-LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JEANETTE NUÑEZ, CHAIR, SPACE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



“ This project is a perfect example of FDOT’s commitment to serving and working with our local communities to meet their vision for the area and their transportation needs. These bridges not only improve the transportation for spacecrafts and payloads but also increase safety and connectivity for motorists driving on top of it and marine traffic using the waterway below it. Raising the bridge equips this crucial high-tech corridor with robust and resilient infrastructure that will support growth and evolving needs for decades to come.”

-JARED W. PERDUE, P.E., SECRETARY, FDOT

“ The road we are standing on today is more than a bridge – it is a critical artery that supplies the lifeblood to our mission. Kennedy’s mission is to provide continuous access to space from Earth’s premier spaceport using creativity and innovation, and in many ways, this bridge is a representation of that spirit. Creativity and innovation have been paramount since the inception of this project, allowing us to partner with multiple government agencies and work hand in hand with our commercial partners to bring this project to fruition.”

-JANET PETRO, DIRECTOR, NASA’S KENNEDY SPACE CENTER



# FLORIDA'S SPACEPORT SYSTEM TERRITORY UPDATE



## LAUNCH AND LANDING FACILITY

What was once a runway primarily used for government operations, the Space Florida Launch and Landing Facility (LLF) is being transformed into a gateway for aerospace innovation, exploration research, manufacturing, and testing. With the land located in Space Florida's Exploration Park nearing capacity and market demand accelerating, development at the LLF ensures Florida's leadership in the space economy and exploration will continue, bringing new capabilities and customers to the busiest spaceport in the world.

Space Florida continued to expand its role in commercial spaceport operations by supporting 574 total flight operations in FY 2023 at Space Florida's Launch and Landing Facility (LLF) – including the arrivals of SpaceX's Crew 6, the successful return of the U.S. Space Force's X-37B unmanned spaceplane, and delivery of the heatshield for Artemis III. Consciously innovating to further broaden the aerospace industrial base, Space Florida focused on diversifying the industry by working with new manufacturing operations across the supply chain as well as cutting-edge companies employing the industry's top engineers and talent.





## SPACEX – CREW 6

On Florida's Space Coast, teams from SpaceX waited patiently for the arrival of the astronauts as they readied for their mission on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket and Crew Dragon spacecraft. As Crew 6, in March 2023, disembarked the transport aircraft this year, their boots hit the pavement of Space Florida's Launch and Landing Facility where they began their journey to the International Space Station.

## U.S. SPACE FORCE – X-37B

In the early morning hours of November 12, 2022, teams from the United States Air Force and Space Force worked to manage the successful return of the X-37B, the U.S. military's classified spaceplane, to the Space Florida LLF after 908 days in orbit conducting experiments. This marked the third time the spaceplane has landed at this facility. This return underscores the capabilities of Space Florida's LLF that are ideal for both Department of Defense and commercial missions alike. Space Florida is deeply committed to America's national defense and the continued work with the X-37B program.



Other LLF activities included preparation and preservation of land, construction on Hangar Road for improved emergency response access, and completion of the wetland mitigation project. These improvements continued to increase the value of the LLF and its ability to attract innovative companies to Florida. Additional LLF milestones included:

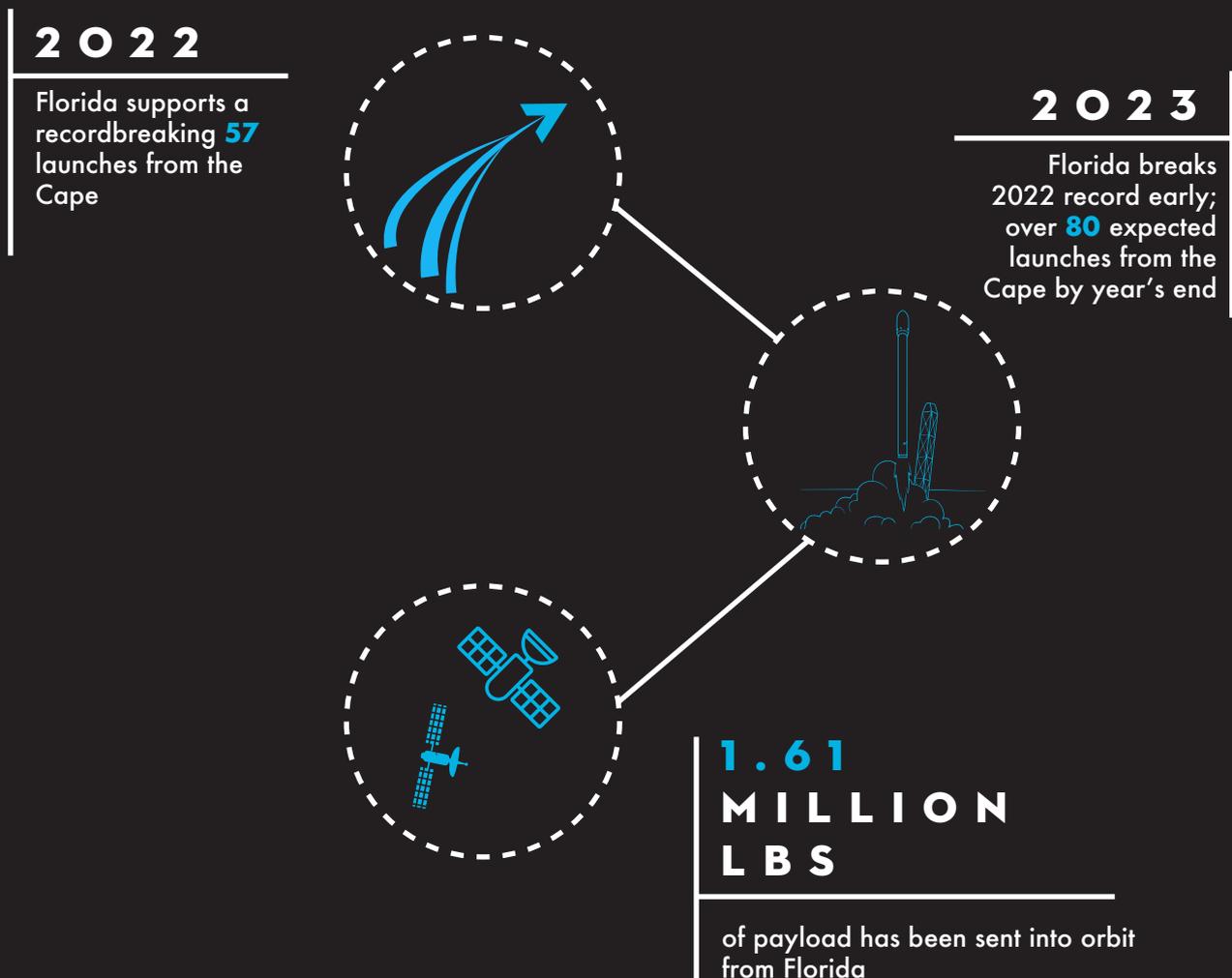
- Took delivery (via NASA's Super Guppy aircraft) of the Orion spacecraft's heatshield for the Artemis III mission that will return humanity to the moon.
- Received a satellite delivery to SpaceX by the Airbus Super Transporter (Beluga) – this was the first time the Airbus aircraft has landed at the LLF in more than a decade.
- Partnered with companies and entities such as Boeing Flight Operations, NASA, SpaceCoast Testing, Tesla, the University of Central Florida Laser Institute, and Volvo.
- Supported 574 aircraft operations, and 228 automotive test events.
- Welcomed companies who utilized the LLF for testing and research for the first time, including Intuitive Machines and Airbus.

# WHAT DO MORE LAUNCHES MEAN FOR THE ECONOMY?

Florida is the undisputed leader in commercial space economic activity and exploration. In Fiscal Year 22/23, Florida experienced 62 launches. It's important to note that the U.S. Space Force and NASA/Kennedy Space Center record launches in calendar year. In the calendar year 2022, Florida supported a record-breaking 57 launches from the Cape. During the 2023 calendar year, the state has already surpassed that record and is on track for more than 80 launches by the end of the year. Space Florida estimates that as of November 2023, 1.61 million pounds of payload has been sent into orbit from Florida, underscoring the economic significance of that increased launch activity.

Florida designated space as an official mode of transportation more than 20 years ago, and that designation has opened the door for Space Florida to work in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation to strategically deploy dollars through the Florida Spaceport Improvement Program (SIP) for critical infrastructure improvements that benefit the entire aerospace ecosystem, attracting more companies and investment. A prime example of this is Space Florida's investment and installation of the utility corridor at the Launch and Landing Facility that attracted Amazon's Project Kuiper to the area.

The aerospace industry and the state are at a point where everything from manufacturing and energy production to logistics and tourism will happen at scale in space. The increased launch cadence is the first chapter in the story of increasing economic activity in space. That includes earth-based research and development, support systems, and supporting in-space assets.



## FINANCE AND INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

— Strategically invested in Florida-headquartered Eve Air Mobility, a spinout from Embraer into a separate publicly traded company.

— Collaborated with Governor Ron DeSantis, Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez (Space Florida Board of Directors Chair), and state, local agencies, and partners on a groundbreaking initiative to support a strong workforce in competitive industries including aerospace. The \$30 million investment announced in September 2022 is dedicated to support workforce development in the Space Coast region.

## JP MORGAN TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITY INVESTOR CONFERENCE

Space Florida was invited to present at the JP Morgan Transportation and Utility Investor Conference in April 2023. Space Florida's attendance and presentation at this conference will help broaden and diversify the pool of financial institutions we can collaborate with on projects. It also stands as a resounding endorsement of the trust and confidence that leading financial institutions place in the organization. It serves as a compelling testament to Space Florida's unwavering commitment to meticulous due diligence, ensuring that every opportunity brought to the table is not only financially sound but also underpinned by robust economics. The invitation to present at this influential forum underscores Space Florida's track record of delivering investment opportunities that resonate with the financial community's standards. It is a validation of the dedication to advancing projects that not only benefit the aerospace industry but also generate substantial economic value for Florida and taxpayers. This trust reinforces Space Florida's position as a reliable partner in fostering sustainable growth and innovation within the aerospace sector, and it underscores its role in making Florida the premier location for global and interplanetary aerospace commerce.

FINANCE &  
INVESTMENT:  
STRONG  
FINANCIAL  
INDUSTRY  
COLLABORATION

## AE INDUSTRIAL PARTNERSHIP

Space Florida partnered with AE Industrial Partners, LP (AEI), a leader in space investing and a private equity firm specializing in aerospace, defense and government services, to accelerate the growth of Florida's aerospace and space industries, bringing in investment and creating job opportunities in the state. As part of the partnership, AEI will leverage Space Florida's unique funding resources and expertise to help attract and invest in companies that are looking to expand or relocate to Florida. The partnership will also focus on developing a talent pipeline for the industry, building on Florida's strong academic institutions and workforce development programs.

The combination of Space Florida's deep industry expertise and innovative financial toolkit for space companies with AEI's proven track record of success aims to strengthen Florida's position as a global leader in aerospace, space, and defense. Florida consistently ranks among the top five U.S. states for aerospace industry employment.



The new space economy is expected to be a huge driver of highly skilled jobs over the coming decades, and we are excited to partner with Space Florida to attract new companies and jobs to Florida. Our state has long been a hub for aerospace and defense, and we believe this partnership will help expand the aerospace and space industries in Florida, while driving significant innovation in the sector."

-KIRK KONERT, PARTNER, AEI



AE Industrial and Space Florida have worked together on multiple projects over the last several years. Space Florida has been a great partner to our portfolio companies, and we're excited to formalize this partnership. Our goal is to streamline the financial tools that Space Florida offers and collaborate on innovative capital approaches to our deals from the formation stage through the life of our ownership."

-JON LUSCZAKOSKI, VICE PRESIDENT, AEI



Space Florida is preparing for a future business climate where everything from manufacturing and energy production to tourism and other economic activity occurs in space at scale. Our goal is to make Florida the gateway to space. Strategic partnerships with leading financial institutions are key ways we more rapidly achieve that goal and fulfill our mission to solidify Florida's dominance as the leading global entity for a global aerospace and space economy."

-RON LAU, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMS, SPACE FLORIDA

## FLORIDA FIRST CAPITAL FINANCE CORPORATION PARTNERSHIP

Florida First Capital Finance Corporation (FCF) and Space Florida announced a strategic partnership to help develop and grow Florida's vital space and aerospace supply chain businesses. The partnership will help increase access to capital opportunities and assist supply chain businesses in securing financial resources to achieve their business growth goals.

While Space Florida's economic impact is distributed throughout a variety of the state's top industries, it's projected that over the next five years, manufacturing will surpass knowledge-based services as the sector most benefiting from Space Florida, making this partnership timely. This partnership opens the doors of opportunity for companies across the aerospace and space supply chain to better connect with creative financing options.

FCF is a nonprofit certified development company, created by the State of Florida to promote economic development and job creation by small businesses. fcf provides SBA 504 financing and other state and federal loan programs to eligible small businesses for the purchase of owner-occupied commercial property, heavy machinery/equipment, and more. Florida's aerospace industry is essential to creating a diverse economy. Through this agreement, Space Florida and FCF will work collaboratively to identify the growth needs of supply chain businesses to help increase productivity and support their overall mission.



This dynamic partnership will create a better Florida for all by helping space/aerospace supply chain businesses grow and succeed. Florida First Capital shares Space Florida's commitment to continue building on a robust space industry while strengthening Florida's economy."

-TODD KOCOUREK, PRESIDENT AND CEO, FCF

# PUTTING NATIONAL SECURITY FIRST

## BRINGING STARCOM HEADQUARTERS TO FLORIDA

In May 2023, the U.S. Air Force announced that Florida's Patrick Space Force Base was selected as the preferred location for the U.S. Space Force Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM) headquarters, subject to final basing action by the Secretary of the Air Force. The announcement was the result of the campaign to bring STARCOM Headquarters to Florida by the many partners statewide and the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis and Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez.

Space Florida worked in partnership with the Florida Defense Support Task Force, the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Florida High Tech Corridor, Florida Institute of Technology, National Center for Simulation, Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation, University of Central Florida, and many other state and local organizations on the campaign.

The efforts included development of white papers outlining the data supporting a Florida-based STARCOM headquarters location, briefings and roundtable discussions with key U.S. Space Force (USSF) leaders and sending letters to the Secretary of the Air Force from Lieutenant Governor Nuñez and members of the Florida Defense Support Task Force.

The decision by the U.S. Air Force reflects the strategic importance of Florida's historic position in advancing national security and defense in space, which reaffirms this critical role in advancing the nation's space and military capabilities.

Florida is home to the most active and best staffed launch site, with a strong space operations culture, including a world-recognized capital of simulation, modeling and digital domain and gaming technologies. Both critical elements in the training and preparation of the nation's next generation of Space Force Guardians. This is a recognition of Florida's forward-thinking, innovative environment, and strong support of the military and their families. It also underscores our standing as the leader in the commercial space industry, focused on rapidly developing and adapting new technologies and operational thinking. Florida is undoubtedly the ideal culture and environment for training the next generation of Guardians.

STARCOM will prepare combat-ready USSF Guardians to fight and win in a contested, degraded, and operationally limited environment through the deliberate development, education, and training of space professionals. It will also develop space warfighting doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures to test and evaluate USSF capabilities.



# WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

## SPACE FLORIDA SPACE ACADEMY

In the dynamic landscape of Florida's aerospace industry, bridging the skills gap and fostering a highly skilled workforce is pivotal to maintain and enhance the state's position as a global aerospace hub. Over the course of Fiscal Year 2022-2023, Space Florida has spearheaded numerous convenings that brought together the world's leading aerospace employers, suppliers, and Florida's esteemed training providers, encompassing local workforce boards, school districts, technical colleges, state colleges, and universities. The collective outcome of these deliberations has been the meticulous construction of an exhaustive skills list, one that spans the entire educational continuum, from secondary education to postsecondary institutions. This remarkable endeavor has paved the way for the concept of the Space Florida Space Academy.

The Space Academy represents a visionary initiative that is capable of implementation in any school district across Florida. At its core, the academy houses a diverse array of career pathways designed to cater to the specific needs of the aerospace and related industries. These pathways encompass aerospace/aviation, advanced manufacturing, construction, cybersecurity, and logistics – each bearing direct relevance to the aerospace sector's dynamic demands. Within each of these industry verticals lies a spectrum of regionally demanded skills and credentials, each vital in the eyes of employers operating within their respective domains.



## MASTER CREDENTIALS: SPACE FLORIDA & INDUSTRY LEADING ON WORKFORCE

One of the core strengths of Space Florida's initiatives lies in its unique ability to unite aerospace employers and training providers in a collaborative effort. Through a series of convenings and discussions, Space Florida has served as a pivotal bridge connecting industry leaders with the institutions responsible for imparting essential skills and knowledge. Central to these interactions has been the development of Florida's Master Credential List, a compendium that stands as the most comprehensive catalog of aerospace-approved credentials and in-demand skills to date. This list, underpinned by the invaluable input of industry experts, has become a cornerstone of Space Florida's commitment to equip students across the state with regionally in-demand credentials and skills, thereby fortifying the talent pipeline essential for the continued growth and success of Florida's aerospace industry.

Space Florida's efforts over the past year represents a testament to Florida's dedication to fostering a robust aerospace workforce. By aligning the aspirations of industry leaders and the expertise of training providers, Space Florida's initiatives have created a blueprint for success, ensuring that the state remains at the forefront of aerospace innovation and excellence. The journey ahead promises to be one of transformation, as we embark on a mission to empower the aerospace professionals of tomorrow with the skills and knowledge essential to propel Florida's aerospace sector to new horizons.

# ADVOCACY



## **SPACEFLIGHT LIABILITY LAW: FIRST STEPS TOWARD POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Almost two decades ago, Florida designated space as an official mode of transportation. Because of this, our spaceport system is a fundamentally integrated component of Florida’s quintimodal transportation infrastructure. This is one of the reasons Florida leads in the evolution of the commercial space marketplace. This distinction has allowed for the space industry ecosystem to thrive in Florida in ways that other states and nations have not yet experienced. Space is part of our infrastructure, which unlocks diverse investment opportunities from both public and private entities.

Space Florida has always been focused on not just what the best business climate is today, but how we prepare for a future business climate for space enterprise when manufacturing, mining, tourism, energy production, and other economic activity is occurring in space at scale. That vision requires a policy framework that provides businesses with a predictable and stable operating environment, which ultimately benefits taxpayers, job seekers, and our overall economy.

The Spaceflight Liability Law, passed during the 2023 Florida Legislative Session, is part of the growth and development of the space industry ecosystem and is part of creating that policy framework. This law provides an informed awareness framework for all those involved in the development of the next generation of human spaceflight systems.

The space industry is at the forefront of technological advancements and groundbreaking discoveries. Florida laws must continue to be just as advanced when it comes to space policy and financial frameworks. As industry continues to advance, so must Florida’s regulatory environment.

## **STATE OF THE SPACE INDUSTRIAL BASE**

Space Florida hosted the 2023 State of the Space Industrial Base Workshop – Commercial Launch Sector Working Group on May 2-3, 2023. The workshop was part of the annual State of the Space Industrial Base conference series sponsored by the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), U.S. Space Force, the Air Force Research Lab, and co-hosted by NewSpace New Mexico. The annual workshop, themed “Building Enduring Advantages in Space for Security and Prosperity,” entered its fifth year of bringing together key stakeholders to address the current state and future opportunities in the rapidly evolving space industry.

Focusing on the commercial launch sector, the Florida-based working group session brought together leading space companies, government agencies, and key U.S. military and defense organizations—including the U.S. Space Force – to discuss the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities. The discussions explored topics such as financing of infrastructure; operating spaceports in Contested, Degraded and Operationally Limited (CDOL) environments; and new maritime components in spaceports.

# ADVOCACY



## ATTRACTING INVESTMENT: MAKING SPACEPORT BONDS TAX EXEMPT

In June 2023, Space Florida wrote a letter urging the IRS Commissioner to support adding spaceports as a qualified tax-exempt category of private activity bonds to encourage critical infrastructure improvements for the benefit of U.S. economic competitiveness in the global space industry and to strengthen national security. Today it is well understood the historic and current imperative of assuring airports and seaports qualify for tax-exempt financing, but in stark contrast, spaceports are absent from this exemption. This is an oversight for which the contemporary economic landscape demands remedy.

Giving spaceport bonds tax exempt status on par with airports and seaports is crucial for the growth and development of the space industry, and by extension the broader economy.

The letter to the IRS Commissioner served as the catalyst for Space Florida's advocacy efforts on the federal level. Engaging the Florida Congressional delegation, the U.S. Chamber, and industry leaders from other states such as Virginia and New Mexico, Space Florida has been the leader on this issue.

Enabling spaceports to access tax-exempt financing will provide the United States with a significantly more competitive posture to fund spaceports through the private capital markets in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. Further, space companies are national defense companies, and the U.S. Department of Defense increasingly relies upon the agility and innovation of the commercial space industry to meet their national security mission requirements. This frees up the U.S. military to focus its resources on core mission responsibilities. The growing number of spaceports also play critical roles in developing and deploying advanced technologies that have military applications, such as missile defense systems and hypersonic weapons. By providing tax-exempt financing to spaceport facilities and infrastructure across the country, the United States can stimulate the necessary private investment in the space industry and support the development of new technologies that can enhance American national security capabilities. In the face of growing competition from other nations, the aggressive development of spaceport infrastructure across our nation is key to maintaining the United States' leadership in space.



# FUELING INNOVATION

At the heart of Space Florida's mission lies a commitment to fueling innovation and catalyzing investment projects that push the boundaries of what's possible. In order to achieve these bold goals, Space Florida fosters strategic partnerships that harness the collective power of the business community and supports collaborations with global partners. Throughout the past year, Space Florida sustained its dynamic partnership with the Florida Venture Forum, Florida's largest and most expansive statewide support organization dedicated to nurturing investors and entrepreneurs.

As of June 30, 2023, our cumulative efforts in supporting capital accelerator events over the past nine years have yielded staggering results, attracting an impressive total of nearly \$700 million in funding, investments, and exits for the companies that have participated. This Fiscal Year, Space Florida and the Florida Venture Forum jointly hosted two exceptional events that galvanized innovation and entrepreneurship, drawing an impressive cohort of presenting companies into the spotlight. These collaborations exemplify Space Florida's unwavering commitment to fostering a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and investment, propelling Florida to the forefront of technological advancement and economic growth.

## 2022 FLORIDA EARLY STAGE CAPITAL CONFERENCE IN TAMPA

The goal of the Early Stage Capital Conference is to provide Florida entrepreneurs and innovators with an opportunity to engage with potential investors. During the 2022 conference in Tampa, FL, a panel of investor judges reviewed presentations and supporting materials from 19 companies. Grand Prize Winner EVQLV received \$40,000 for Space Florida's Accelerating Innovation (AI) Award, while 1st Runner-Up Novineer, Inc. received \$30,000 and 2nd Runner-Up Revterra Corporation received \$20,000. Additionally, OverTheShoulder and Pet HealthCare Innovations were the recipients of the 13th annual 2022 Statewide Collegiate Startup Competition, attracting the "best of the best" in collegiate competitors from Florida's leading innovation-focused colleges and universities. They each received \$5,000.

The companies eligible to win originated from one of several industries including aerospace, artificial intelligence, robotics, virtual reality, cybersecurity, and others. The presenters were selected from a pool of more than 150 applicants by a committee of active Florida venture capital investors. Space Florida provided the Accelerating Innovation Award dollars totaling \$100,000.



# FUELING INNOVATION

## 2023 FLORIDA AEROSPACE+EMERGING TECH FORUM

This forum is dedicated to fueling the growth of emerging tech and aerospace companies and connecting entrepreneurs with industry experts and opening access to financial investment opportunities. A panel of investor judges reviewed presentations and supporting materials from four companies. The award recipients were:

—Anya Freeman, Kind Designs (Miami Beach): Grand prize award recipient of \$40,000

—Rob Sladen, Zulu Pods (Ft. Lauderdale): First runner up recipient of \$30,000

—Zack Ernst, Ainthoven (Cocoa Beach): Second runner up recipient of \$20,000

—Don Gaspar - Gigantor Technologies (Melbourne Beach): Third runner up recipient of \$10,000

The event was held at Groundswell Startups in Melbourne, Florida, a Space Florida partner. DeepWork Capital, an early-stage venture capital firm based in Orlando, also announced it will invest \$100,000 in Kind Designs.

The presenting companies were selected from a pool of more than 60 applicants by a committee of active Florida venture capital investors.



# FUELING INNOVATION

## ISRAEL INNOVATION AUTHORITY

Space Florida and the Israel Innovation Authority, an independent publicly funded agency dedicated to fostering innovation ecosystems, celebrated 10 years of partnership this past year. The program, with \$2 million available in funding, has supported the research, development, and commercialization of aerospace and related technology projects for the benefit of Florida's and Israel's economy. To date, Space Florida and the Israel Innovation Authority have funded \$20 million in ground-breaking research and development projects. This partnership has not only strengthened ties between Florida and Israel but has also fueled the emergence of cutting-edge technologies, paving the way for a brighter future in the aerospace and technology sectors in the state of Florida.

By combining the expertise and resources of both entities, this partnership has fostered an environment conducive to breakthrough advancements and entrepreneurial growth:

— Sidus Space, Merritt Island, Florida and Maris-Tech, Israel: This group proposes to develop and test in orbit a 360-degree ultra-high definition (HD) video recording and downloading system for the purposes of conjunction avoidance, rendezvous, and proximity operations. This system will enable the safe deorbiting of satellites that meet the requirements for Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite operations, while providing a cost-effective approach to complex orbital environments.

— Arralis Space Daytona Beach, Florida & Ayecka Communications Systems, Israel: The project involves the joint development of a complete, integrated satellite communication system with a modem, transceiver, and antennas that can support DVB-SX2, multiple modulation schemes, and encryption.

— Guident Autonomous Intelligence, Boca Raton, Florida and Novelsat Limited, Israel: In compliance with regulations for operating autonomous vehicles on public roads in numerous U.S. states, a Remote Monitor and Control Center (RMCC) solution is required and under this program, will be developed by this group of companies.

— ETA Space, Rockledge, Florida and Helios Project, Israel: This venture intends to leverage each companies' specific technology expertise to develop and deploy a joint Lunar Oxygen Station that will be used to convert Lunar regolith into liquid oxygen for propulsion and life support applications.

— Sidus Space, Merritt Island, Florida & Lulav Space, Israel: This group proposes to develop and demonstrate an Event Based Star Tracker for application to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) vehicles. They will innovatively engineer and test in orbit an event-based star tracker that meets the requirements for improved operations of orbiting spacecraft and rocket launch systems compared to current state-of-the-art star trackers widely in use.



# FUELING INNOVATION

## ISRAEL INNOVATION AUTHORITY

Past recipients include Tampa-based StemRad and their radiation-shielding vest 'AstroRad', developed in partnership with Lockheed Martin. With initial funding from Space Florida, 'AstroRad' was researched and tested at Kennedy Space Center for the goal of protecting astronauts in LEO. The recent culmination of this vital research was the successful round the Moon flight of 'AstroRad', as it was scientifically tested aboard NASA's Artemis I mission.

The joint funding program established in 2013 has provided crucial support for projects that have transformative implications for the aerospace industry. Through this collaboration, Florida-based companies have gained access to Israeli technological prowess and innovation, while Israeli companies have benefited from the state's thriving aerospace ecosystem.



Congratulations to this year's Florida-Israel Innovation Partnership Program recipients. This collaboration between Florida and Israel holds significant value for our space industries. By working together, we ensure a prosperous future for aerospace and further strengthen the economic relationship between Florida and Israel."

-LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JEANETTE NUÑEZ, CHAIR,  
SPACE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Our decade-long partnership with Space Florida in space-related technologies has yielded incredible successes and propelled innovative projects forward that will truly revolutionize the aerospace sector. With an annual joint investment of \$2 million, we have leveraged disruptive innovations and projects all while further strengthening the ties between our economies."

-DROR BIN, CEO, ISRAEL INNOVATION AUTHORITY

# 2023 FLORIDA SPACE ART CONTEST

Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez announced the 2023 Florida Space Art Contest at Dante B. Fascell Elementary in Miami. This is the second annual Space Art Contest aimed at encouraging Florida students in grades K-5 to create an art piece inspired by the theme: Time Travel to 2123: Florida's Future as the Space Capital.

Miami-made artist Romero Britto was announced as this year's featured artist for the contest. Space Florida, as a key sponsor of the Lieutenant Governor's Space Art Contest, believes supporting STEAM education initiatives is an integral part of its mission. Both space and art are about exploration, imagination, and pushing forward to what's next for humanity.

The future is right here in the minds of children and expressed through colors and paper. Each student submitted an original, two-dimensional artwork based on this year's theme and the submissions were broken down into two categories: K-2 and 3-5. The Department of State's Division of Arts and Culture reviewed all artwork received and selected the top 60 entries. The Lieutenant Governor then selected the top 12 finalists, the Romero Britto Award recipient, and the two grand prize winners.

Two grand prize winners will have their original art piece flown into space on an upcoming SpaceX mission targeted for early 2024!



**GRAND PRIZE  
WINNER**

**RAFAEL KLEIMAN,**  
2nd Grade  
True North  
Classical Academy  
Dadeland  
Miami-Dade  
County



**GRAND PRIZE  
WINNER**

**AILYNN CHEN,**  
4th Grade  
Windermere  
Preparatory  
School  
Orange County



**ROMERO BRITTO  
AWARD**

**CHLOE BARRY,**  
5th Grade  
Palmer Catholic  
Academy  
St. Johns County



Thank you to the over 1,500 students who participated in the 2023 Florida Space Art Contest. Over the last two years, we received over 4,000 entries from some of Florida's most talented young artists and visionaries. Their passion for space and art is evident in their truly unique and creative submissions."

-LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JEANETTE NUÑEZ, CHAIR, SPACE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Sharing the creative process with children is one way we can inspire the next generation of creators. The partnership between art and space creates new realities that captivate in unexpected ways. I'm proud to work with Lieutenant Governor Nuñez and Space Florida this year and look forward to helping propel these children forward."

-ROMERO BRITTO, ARTIST



Florida's historic space achievements would not have been possible without harnessing the power of science and math. It was great to join Lt. Governor Nuñez today as we launched an exciting space art contest and announced new professional development opportunities for Florida educators.

-MANNY DIAZ, JR., COMMISSIONER, FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# SPACE FLORIDA LEADERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
JEANETTE NUÑEZ**

Space Florida Board Chair,  
*State of Florida*



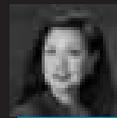
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